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My Point of View

I was never the ideal student through my school days, ranked around thirty second once in a class of fifty four. Made it to cultural captain in my twelfth year and was evidently more interested in music and the arts. Got in through a college entrance exam and got my first whiff of the Fine Arts, a whiff that was to change my life forever.

And so I devoted five academic years to the arts, the first three of which really mattered. My mind was reeling with a rush of new information, I was interested in history and culture and suddenly... it all made sense. Here was a field of study so multi-disciplinary in nature that it linked everything else and made it significant. I exited my Master's programme receiving proficiency awards and a Gold Medal to my name.

There are few that have the luxury of loving their 'job' and I am one of them. I teach Visual Arts and lecture at both school and college. I particularly love teaching the International Baccalaureate program as the syllabus allows flexibility that is conducive to teaching art. I begin my class getting to know my students and slowly zone in on particular areas of art that interest them. Depending on the careers they want to pursue or their specific fields of interest, I chart out possible projects and workshops. Having a limited number of students in my class enables individualized teaching.

Through slide show presentations, videos, movies and libraries- art theory and art history are introduced. The students learn about the elements of art, basic perspective, design principles and work on several other exercises to hone their skill and sensitivity to media. They explore art history, art movements and the evolution of art across different cultural perspectives and are encouraged to draw parallels and make connections. Strong importance is placed on research and analysis in the IB where the student produces an investigation book at the end of two years summing up observations, documenting procedures and exploring new ideas.

Class demos familiarise the students with the common media and through trial and error we explore some not so con-

ventional media such as wire, packing tape, and several others that defy classification! The students are also encouraged to experiment with textiles, installations, happenings and performance art. News paper clippings, gallery tours and visits to artist communities such as Cholamandal Artist's Village help enhance a student's contemporary knowledge and keep them well informed of new and emerging media. At the end of two years they present their artworks and investigation books to an external examiner in a personal interview and are graded for the same. The results have been fairly remarkable considering the initial tentative steps.

I have had the occasional student join the course under the mistaken impression that art is 'easy'. We plod along and manage. But for those that are ready to take the plunge- they find themselves a new language, a powerful voice that is bold enough to pitch their opinions at the public and watch for reactions.

I look forward to my classes with a bunch of eager students from whom I have more to learn than teach. I take great joy in watching their faces light up when they've had their private epiphanies, walking around dazed by the gravity of an art concept they've suddenly assimilated. Some are enthusiastic to a point where I receive calls at any point of the day... or night might I add. X-ray sheets resulting from a broken bone turn into lamp shades, old watchmen's bicycles become part of an installation, thrown away bottle caps become a potent public message, art is a wonderful thing!

- Anisha Verghese

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